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STATE OF MAINE
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

TO: Senator Margaret Rotundo, Senate Chair
Representative Drew Gattine, House Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs

FROM: *JMB* Senator Joseph M. Baldacci, Senate Chair
AW Representative Tiffany Roberts, House Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

DATE: March 3, 2026

SUBJECT: Recommendations on the Governor's Proposed Supplemental Budget, LD 2212

The Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee is pleased to provide its recommendations on LD 2212, the supplemental budget bill. Pursuant to Joint Rule 304, the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife met to review the supplemental budget initiatives and language pertaining to the agencies under our jurisdiction.

A summary of the committee's vote on the initiatives and language parts is below.

The following initiatives, all within the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, are supported unanimously¹:

- ATV Safety and Education Program, Ref. #537
- Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Enforcement Operations, Ref. #535
- Fisheries and Hatcheries Operations, Ref. #533
- Division of Public Information and Education, Ref. #539 and Ref. #540
- IFW – Resource Management Services, Ref. #530 and Ref. #531

The committee also voted unanimously to move language parts FFF and GGG into the budget, with a vote of 11 in favor, 0 opposed.

A majority of members (6 of 11) voted to add two additional initiatives into the budget to restore transportation to Swan Island. Five members voted in opposition.

¹ By the 11 members who registered votes on the supplemental budget.

Full voting information and additional initiative language is attached to this memo.

Thank you for your consideration of the recommendations of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

Encl: IFW Report-back document

cc: Members, Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
Lucia Nixon, OFPR Analyst, AFA Committee
Majlinda Mulla-Everett, Clerk, AFA Committee
Mandy Connor, OFPR, Legislative Researcher
Rebekah Davis, OFPR, Administrative Secretary

Language Parts

Part FFF (see pg: 5) Committee Vote: 11-0 AFA Vote: _____

Part GGG (see pg: 6) Committee Vote: 11-0 AFA Vote: _____

PART FFF

Sec. FFF-1. 12 MRSA §10108, sub-§13 is enacted to read:

13. Inland Fisheries Conservation and Enhancement Program. The Inland Fisheries Conservation and Enhancement Program, referred to in this subsection as “the program,” is established within the department's fisheries and hatcheries division.

A. The program must:

- (1) Prioritize native inland fish conservation and the research, management and enhancement of the State's native fish, including but not limited to those identified by the department as species of greatest conservation need, brook trout, lake whitefish, arctic charr and lake trout;
- (2) Identify and implement actions to enhance native fish production and stocking, including assessment of native fish production programs; and
- (3) Continue to conserve, protect and enhance the State's sport fish fisheries.

B. To the extent that resources allow, the program must also support and incorporate the following elements:

- (1) The design and implementation of regional and statewide fisheries research programs to conserve the State's native inland and sport fish fisheries, ensuring the long-term sustainability and health of the State's fisheries;
- (2) Investment in new technology, equipment and training programs to enhance the success and effectiveness of the program;
- (3) Effective communication regarding ongoing program actions, success and collaboration;
- (4) The establishment of collaborative partnerships to engage organizations, communities and companies representing conservation groups, anglers, land trusts and other organizations involved in outdoor recreation in implementing and publicizing the program; and
- (5) Engagement with representatives of various agencies, anglers and nonprofit organizations to enhance and restore the State's native fisheries habitat and populations.

C. The commissioner may accept money, goods or services donated to the department for the program. Money accepted by the commissioner under this subsection must be deposited into the fisheries and hatcheries division dedicated account.

D. The commissioner, or the commissioner's designee, shall report no later than February 1st annually to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over inland fisheries and wildlife matters regarding program activities, emphasizing the work being done to conserve, research, manage and enhance the State's native inland fish populations and including a summary of expenditures and their allocation.

**PART FFF
SUMMARY**

This Part establishes the Inland Fisheries Conservation and Enhancement Program to prioritize native inland fish conservation and the research, management and enhancement of the State's native fish.

PART GGG

Sec. GGG-1. 12 MRSA §10252, as amended by PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §51 and affected by §422, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

Fish hatchery maintenance fund

1. Fund established. The fish hatchery maintenance fund, referred to in this section as "the fund," is established in the department as a nonlapsing fund to be used by the commissioner to fund or assist in funding engineering designs, statewide facilities assessments and maintenance, repair and capital improvements at fish hatcheries and feeding stations owned by the State. The fund may be used for overtime personnel services costs when overtime for fish stocking and other hatchery-related work is operationally required. Additionally, the fund may support the design, construction and operation of additional state fish hatcheries that support the mission of the department, as approved by the Legislature. The fund may not be used to fund the general operating costs of an existing fish hatchery.

2. Funding. Notwithstanding section 10801, subsection 4, \$2 from each fishing license sold must be deposited into the fund. Additionally, money deposited pursuant to Title 29-A, section 456-C, subsection 3, paragraph A, subparagraph (1) must also be credited to the fund. The commissioner may accept and deposit into the fund any monetary gifts, donations or other contributions from public or private sources and must use that money for the purposes specified in subsection 1.

**PART GGG
SUMMARY**

This Part repeals and replaces the existing statute, providing authority of the fund to support the engineering design, construction, maintenance and repair of current and additional fish hatcheries and feeding stations owned by the State and to pay for personal services overtime for fish stocking and other hatchery-related work when operationally required. This Part also authorizes that \$2 from each fishing license sold and that money deposited pursuant to Title 29-A, section 456-C, subsection 3, paragraph A, subparagraph (1), must be deposited into the fund.

Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
Proposed Amendments to Existing Initiatives in the Supplemental Budget (LD 2212)
March 2026

Amendments to restore transportation to Swan Island

- I. \$50,000 one-time transfer from the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's end-of-year balance to upgrade and certify the department's ferry to restore service to Swan Island

- II. \$135,000 one-time General Fund appropriation to fund a 3-year pilot program to allow the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to contract for seasonal small vessel service to Swan Island. The department is directed to report back to the committee having jurisdiction over inland fisheries and wildlife matters after the program's conclusion. The committee may report out a bill based on the report to the legislative session when the report is received.